



EXECUTIVE COMPUTING

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Color graphics market in grasp of ExecuVision

One of the snazziest new tools for business users of small computers is color graphics software. Its main use is to prepare *slide presentations* for meetings.

Of all those available, a program called **ExecuVision** (\$395) is the best I've seen. It is a landmark package, with the potential to capture the market for presentation graphics in much the same way that VisiCalc did for spreadsheet software a few years ago. Almost all executives regularly give presentations of one kind or another, and this program can help prepare exciting slides to back up their verbal comments.

But most people are not yet aware of the product. As a result, practically all the commonly used methods for executives to prepare slide presentations are either expensive and time consuming, or inexpensive and amateurish.

Current methods

On the expensive side are in-house art departments with typesetting and camera equipment, or outside professional services that use minicomputers or mainframes to generate graphs and charts. In either case, the output is usually 35mm photographic slides, and the cost ranges from \$10 to \$30 per slide.

Less expensive are overhead transparencies, which are prepared by first typing (or even hand writing) the item to be projected on plain paper and then simply photocopying it onto a plastic sheet. The resulting "transparency" is placed on top of an overhead projector. This method is more popular because it's relatively cheap (just a few dollars per slide, mostly for the typist's time). Unfortunately, overhead transparencies are usually difficult to read by the audience and also require the speaker to manually handle and center each one on the projector — a process that is time-consuming for the speaker and distracting for the audience.

Certainly there are other alternatives, but these two techniques are the most common and well-known. Despite their drawbacks, virtually every medium-size and large company uses one or both presentation methods on a daily basis.

Enter ExecuVision

If you have an IBM PC (or compatible small computer) with a color screen, you're in luck. Here are some things the ExecuVision program can help you do:

- ✓ Draft slides right on the computer screen, in full color. Fonts of different sizes and styles may be chosen for text; and pie charts, bar graphs or plots may be used to represent numerical data.

- ✓ Give you a choice of hundreds of pre-drawn diagrams and images from the ExecuVision library to spice up your presentation. (19 separate libraries of images at \$90 each may be ordered). This is a step above other graphics packages on the market.

- ✓ Let you rearrange and preview the slides on the screen, just as if they were being presented to a group. An electronic flip-chart! By hitting the right-arrow key on the keyboard, the next slide is shown; or you can go back to the previous slide by hitting the left-arrow key. Alternatively, the system can be set up to change slides automatically at specified time intervals.

Presentation methods

After drafting your presentation on the computer, you can pick the way to present the slides, depending on the size of your audience and your budget.

For example, for up to about three people, you can simply haul your computer into the conference room and show the slides right on your computer screen. This is the least expensive method and is impressive for small groups. It avoids all photography expense and provides extreme ease-of-use — you can add or modify your presentation at a moment's notice.

For somewhat larger groups, you can still use your computer, but this time with a large television-type monitor. Depending on the size of your monitor and the seating arrangement of your audience, this method might still be comfortable for up to eight people.

For larger audiences you can still avoid photography expenses, if you wish, by using a video projection system. However, this is generally not as effective as actual 35mm photographic slides. Kodak offers a unit called the Instagraphic Slide Imager (\$459) that takes instant and beautiful 35mm slides of the computer screen. These slides can be shown in the traditional way on your slide projector.

Who does the work?

Here's a question which may be on your mind: "As a business manager, should I prepare my own presentations or delegate the learning of ExecuVision to someone else?"

Since slides don't ordinarily have a lot of text, there isn't a lot of typing, so, there's a real advantage to doing it yourself. It allows you to be creative. Furthermore, it's actually fun to play with the program! But don't tell anyone you're having a good time — AFTER ALL, you're supposed to be working.

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